

Francis' Rules

Established in Canada, recommended by the BC Registrar for board governance. Learn more: www.democraticrules.com/the-rules/

Short Summary of the Rules

- **Fairness:** Equal rights of members and good order are the underlying principles.
- **The final authority** is the majority of voting members, provided a quorum is present, subject always to any applicable higher law (a law of the land, a constitution, a bylaw, or an existing standing rule).
- **In formal meetings**, the chair guides impartially without taking part in discussion. In informal meetings, the chair participates as an equal member.
- **A motion should be worded** affirmatively and must not conflict with any higher law. All motions require a seconder.
- **The mover's privilege** allows the mover to reword or withdraw the motion provided there is a seconder and not more than one member objects.
- **Amendments can delete, substitute, or add words to a motion** on the floor but must not negate it or change its topic. An amendment can not be amended.
- **Postpone, refer:** A motion can be postponed to an indefinite or a specific future occasion or referred to a committee for further study.
- **Voting:** Common voting methods include voting by ballot, standing, show of hands, show of voting cards and voice. For a motion to pass, a quorum must be present and more than half the votes cast must be affirmative.
- **Informal Discussion:** A motion to informally discuss some topic, if passed, allows members to consider an idea without the formality of a motion.
- **Rescind, reconsider:** A previous decision can be rescinded or reconsidered by the members at any appropriate time.
- **Ratify:** a previous decision: A decision exceeding the authority of a member, committee or meeting can be ratified at a later meeting.
- **Good order:** Members should discuss only one motion at a time. A member must not take more than a fair share of floor time nor interrupt another member except as allowed with a point of order.
- **Point of Order:** A member who believes that a law or the meeting's good order is being breached may rise immediately and say "point of order." The chair should allow the member to explain and, if necessary, should call for a vote for a decision.

Tips for Meetings

- Discuss the idea together, informally, before forming a motion.
- After a motion is stated, let the mover, aided by the members, modify it before voting. But if more than one member objects, changes require formal amendments.
- Never allow an amendment to the amendment. The motion can be defeated and stated again if necessary.
- The chair must never allow a member to interrupt a speaker or personally criticize or ridicule another member.

Adopt Francis' Rules in Your Organization

Motion: That the adopt Francis' Rules.

Moved:.....

Seconded:.....

Approved:

Not approved:.....